



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Julie Goplin, M.S.
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: jgoplin@nd.gov

State Health Department Issues Warning About Hantavirus Disease

BISMARCK, N.D. – People who are cleaning cabins or other buildings that were closed for the winter should protect themselves against hantavirus, a disease transmitted by infected mice, according to Julie Goplin, epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

“Hantavirus infection has been associated with cleaning or occupying previously vacant cabins or other dwellings,” Goplin said. “It’s important to take precautions while cleaning buildings that are infested with rodents. Preventing infection is important since there is no cure for the disease.”

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) is a viral infection that causes severe lung disease. Mice carry the disease and can transmit the virus to people through bites, urine and fecal droppings. The disease is not transmitted from person to person.

Symptoms of HPS usually occur two to three weeks after infection. Early symptoms commonly include fever, muscle and body aches, fatigue, headache, dizziness, chills, nausea and vomiting. The illness worsens within a short period of time to include coughing and severe shortness of breath when lungs fill with fluid.

Eight cases of HPS have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health since 1993; the most recent was reported in January 2006. Four of the cases were fatal. Nationwide, 416 cases have been reported, of which 150 were fatal.

For more information, call Julie Goplin, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

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Please note: A fact sheet containing important precautions to minimize the risk of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome infection is available at www.nddohpressroom.gov/media/facts. To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.